Chapter 3:

Operating Golden Gate National Recreation Area

The establishment of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in 1972 illustrated a shift in agency priorities that compelled Park Service planners to devise new management strategies. The proclamation accompanied a constellation of changes in statute and policy. When President Richard Nixon signed the bill establishing Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Park Service had very little experience with parks in urban areas and the enormous number of planning and management issues associated with them. The agency had never really been faced with large, vocal, and politically powerful urban constituencies that had strong identification with a new park and its resources so intertwined in the urban landscape. Before the 1970s, national parks in urban areas were typically historic houses and other small, single-purpose entities. With the new parks in the San Francisco Bay Area and greater New York City, the agency entered into a new, far more complicated form of management than it faced even in the most crowded of the traditional park areas.

As did most parks in urban settings, Golden Gate National Recreation Area faced a range of administrative issues foreign to the expansive natural parks that had long been the backbone of the park system. The Park Service needed an administrative and management structure equal to this new set of responsibilities. This system also had to take into account changes in national law, such as the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, which mandated formal and legal responses to all kinds of situations that national parks faced every day. In this context, management became more complicated and complex, more expensive and time-consuming, and decidedly different from anything the National Park Service previously experienced.

The Park Service had a long-standing system of management that was deeply imbued with agency tradition. The agency first established mechanisms for managing and planning parks at its inception in 1916, and many of the assumptions of that earlier era still held firm in agency culture in the 1970s. In this formulation, national parks were primarily places of reverence, localities that enlightened Americans about their culture, history, and natural bounty. Roads, trails, and visitor facilities were designed to promote this kind of nationalism, and that perception governed management strategies as well. It was deeply inculcated in the agency. Even with the new importance of ecology and environmentalism in the 1960s and its spread among the trained professionals eager to join the Park Service, most in the agency, especially those with seniority and power, embraced the older view. They joined the agency because of their commitment to the large natural spaces of the crown jewels, the national parks. The policies such officials made and the way they implemented them reflected that predisposition.[140]

Landscape architects played the central role in designing and implementing this formulation. These professionals dominated the first forty-five years of agency history, taking raw nature and designing discrete accessible and inaccessible public space—later called "wilderness"—from it.[141] Most of their efforts focused on visitor facilities in remote natural parks, a perfect setting for a profession that sought to prove its value in American society as well

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[140] Hal K. Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation? Environmentalism in the U.S. Since 1945* (New York: HarBrace Books, 1997), 58-63.

[141] Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 1-25.

as to the agency that granted landscape architects their prominent opportunity to show the value of their expertise. In large and remote natural parks, the Park Service was the supreme authority, the most powerful entity and often the leading and most stable source of regional employment. Park managers wielded great power in these settings and usually could invent structural realities at will. At most remote parks, the Park Service typically dealt with other federal agencies, peers in the federal system who understood and respected the goals of the agency even when they did not always agree with Park Service plans. In this setting, landscape architects could not only devise plans, but implement them with near-autonomy as well.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the first generation of urban parks with multiple purposes—recreation, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation—indicated a shift in the relationship between parks and their constituencies. Carved from an existing city and its semi-rural and rapidly suburbanizing environs, the new national recreation area faced a range of issues foreign to the superintendents and planners who designed national park policy for Glacier, Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, and their peers. Golden Gate National Recreation Area presented management questions far different from those of the traditional national parks. The agency had to administer uses and practices that predated the arrival of the National Park Service and faced constituencies far broader than those of competing federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management.

For the Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and its peers presented a new, enticing but simultaneously threatening, and starkly defined reality: the Park Service was never the most powerful player at any table when the issues of the Bay Area were under consideration, but its reach extended to the most powerful and prominent regional and state authorities. No longer the dominant player on a periphery, the Park Service became a potentially significant player in the very heart of any region in which it found itself. In this situation, the agency needed a new strategy as well as goals that could be achieved through complicated alliances. At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, that process required adept management and sophisticated understanding of the complex context in which the park operated.

In search of a management strategy, the agency began with its roots, recognizing the need to modify its traditional practices. Managers took Park Service procedures, learned in park areas across the nation, and tried to adapt these ideas to the new circumstances. When those strategies succeeded, the Park Service stuck with them. When they did not, the agency borrowed from any source that seemed to have something to offer. When they found ideas, concepts, and structures such as recreational administration policies that officials recognized as adaptable to their situation, they utilized them. The constraints of the multifaceted management necessary at the park proved more complex than anything the California park system had ever encountered and well beyond the structures and methods used by other similar management agencies. Even the models for parks such as Lake Mead or Glen Canyon National Recreation Areas had little relevance to the urban situation of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. As at Gateway National Recreation Area outside of New York City, the Park Service carved its own way at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

National recreation areas, themselves an idea with resounding significance in the 1960s, emerged from the tension in the National Park Service over the agency's role and goals. Recreational national park areas originated during the New Deal, when landscape architect and later NPS director Conrad L. Wirth promoted the development of recreational open space through the Civilian Conservation Corps program. Wirth saw a developed landscape as essential to public enjoyment, and the system bore his imprint well after he stepped down from the

directorship in 1964. The first national recreation area, Boulder Dam, since renamed Lake Mead National Recreation Area, was established by agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation in 1936; it was followed closely by the establishment of two demonstration recreation areas in Maryland and Virginia. The real growth in national recreation areas followed 1952, after hardline preservationist Newton B. Drury stepped down as director, and when the combination of lakeshore and seashore studies and the so-called "crisis in outdoor recreation" placed a premium on the creation of permanent recreational space. These areas were sometimes called "national recreation areas," but as often fell under headings such as "national seashore," "national lakeshore," or other designations in the unnecessarily complicated nomenclature of the park system. With a few exceptions, Point Reyes National Seashore prominent among them, most of the areas designated as recreational space were vacation spaces, far from the places where people lived in growing numbers and density.[142]

National recreation areas were different from traditional national parks. Their primary, predominant, and sometimes only use was for recreational purposes. Although the kind of moral uplift associated with national parks was possible and even likely in many national recreation areas, few of the mechanisms that furthered such objectives in the parks were applied in the recreation areas. Recreational space was managed under a different set of guidelines from those used for the traditional national parks. Beginning in 1964, natural, cultural, and recreational parks were even governed by different books of regulations, colloquially called the green, blue, and red books. Despite a long history in the Park Service that supported the idea of agency involvement in recreation, many among the traditionalists in the agency scoffed at these utilitarian areas and regarded them as less worthy, even inferior, to the national parks. Even with the political value of urban parks in the 1960s and 1970s, the Park Service sometimes responded slowly to the opportunities presented by parks such as Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Planners such as Nadeau circumvented the books, beginning a process that led their abolition under William Whalen when he became director of the Park Service.[143]

The Bay Area was among the most complex management situations the agency ever encountered. Like Gateway National Recreation Area in the east, Golden Gate National Recreation Area was a collection of loosely connected lands with extended prior use and significant and often vocal constituencies. A broad range of the public demanded input into park management. In the early 1970s, the moment in the twentieth century during which the concept of participatory grassroots democracy received the greatest amount of homage, the Park Service entered a particularly energized community that had much to say about agency goals. Devoid of its usual position of power atop the local hierarchy, the Park Service had to accommodate all of the groups that cared about the new park, bringing them into the process of determining priorities at the park. From Amy Meyer and People for a Golden Gate National Recreation Area (PFGGNRA), San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR), the city and county of San Francisco, neighborhood associations and conservation groups, and the Fort Mason Foundation, itself an outgrowth of the park, to developers who sought economic opportunities within the park, and the demands of other federal agencies, state, county, and local

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[142] Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 273-75; Barry Mackintosh, *The National Parks: Shaping the System* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 52-78; Ronald Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers* (Washington, DC: Resources for the Future, 1984), 107, 168-70; Richard W. Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 138-40, 174-80.

[143] Foresta, *America's National Parks and Their Keepers*; Mackintosh, *Shaping the System*, 62; Nadeau to Haller, January 23, 2002.

governmental bodies and commissions, the park incorporated dozens of perspectives into its plans.

In this, the Park Service paralleled the actions of federal agencies earlier in the century, when faced with insufficient staff and too few resources, they accommodated local interests in exchange for cooperation. Although not a brazen exchange of quid pro quo, such relationships involved the inherently political process of bringing people inside the figurative tent and encouraging them to direct their business outward. In this, the Park Service at Golden Gate National Recreation Area anticipated one of the primary trends of federal management of the last quarter of the twentieth century. As the power and status of federal agencies diminished in the mid-1970s, when public distrust of the federal government soared after Watergate, agencies had to become far more sensitive to local needs and demands. The Park Service became one of the citizens of the Bay Area community, reversing the process characteristic of the siting of a national park. Often in the large natural parks, the people of the region became citizens of the park. This inclusiveness was particularly significant during the 1970s and 1980s, when it served as an indicator of responsible governance in an era when Americans looked on governmental institutions with considerable suspicion. In liberal and freewheeling San Francisco, the give and take became even more important, as interest group coalitions flagged certain issues around which to broaden their constituencies.

At its founding, Golden Gate National Recreation Area already presented a more complicated management situation than most national park areas. It encompassed other national park areas in the vicinity along with the new lands designated for the park. Two existing park areas, Fort Point National Historic Site and Muir Woods National Monument, were included in the park. Both were to retain independent status in the new arrangement, and both kept their superintendents, David Ames and his successor, Marjorie "Mike" Hackett, at Fort Point and Leonard Frank and his successor, Richard B. Hardin, at Muir Woods. Although smaller national park areas had long been managed through larger neighbors, the situation at Golden Gate National Recreation Area inspired new management strategies. Grouping parks was standard in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but this situation was different. No park had yet been managed through a more recently established nearby park while retaining a full-fledged superintendent with concomitant autonomy. Golden Gate National Recreation Area shaped up as a new endeavor for the Park Service in yet another way.

Definitive and flexible leadership at Golden Gate National Recreation Area played an instrumental role in helping the agency find its way through the morass of local and regional politics and interests. At the age of thirty-three, William J. Whalen became superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in early 1973 and became the park's general superintendent in 1974, when individual superintendents were appointed for the north and south units of the park. Whalen was a master at discerning the appropriate path for the park in the complex and tumultuous region it inhabited. In this process, Whalen defined the model for urban areas in the park system at a time when that definition was crucial to the agency's political goals and bureaucratic success. Whalen's adept management in the Bay Area was so significant and the future of the park system so depended on urban areas that his achievements catapulted the thirty-seven-year-old Whalen to the directorship of the Park Service in 1977. His ascendance cemented the importance of national recreation areas. With Whalen as director of the agency, the park system set out to emulate the Golden Gate National Recreation Area model across the nation.

The selection of Whalen, then assistant superintendent at Yosemite National Park, to be the first superintendent at Golden Gate National Recreation Area confirmed his meteoric rise in the Park Service. Raised in Burgettstown, Pennsylvania, southwest of Pittsburgh, Whalen came to the Park Service in 1965, when as part of Sargent Shriver's War on Poverty program, he started a Job Corps Conservation Center at Great Smokey Mountains National Park in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Whalen remained with the Park Service throughout the rest of the decade, first at Catoctin Mountain Park near Camp David, Maryland, and later in Washington, D.C., developing Job Corps programs. Early in 1969, Director George Hartzog asked the twenty-nine-year-old Whalen to develop a ranger training program that would provide urban experience for Park Service personnel. Transferred to National Capital Parks later that year, Whalen became Chief of the Division of Urban and Environmental Activities, essentially chief of operations. While at National Capital Parks, Whalen ran the "Summer in the Parks" program, the endeavor that gave the Park Service urban credibility in the aftermath of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. The Park Service was the only federal agency not treated as the enemy during the urban uprisings that plagued American cities in the summers of the late 1960s. The Summer in the Parks program, which gave urban youth opportunities in nearby national park areas, was credited for the lack of animosity toward the Park Service. After this stint in the nation's capital, Whalen was regarded as the agency official most in touch with the young in a society bereft of communication across the generations. He became the agency's point man for such issues, moving to Yosemite in 1971 in the aftermath of the July 4, 1970 riots in Stoneman's Meadows in which park rangers on horseback routed long-haired tent-campers, offering the image of the Park Service as a police agency. Whalen was selected to work with the youthful constituencies which so vexed the agency. His successes earned him power and significance that exceeded his years and his term of service. Offered the choice of either of the two new urban national recreation areas, Whalen chose the superintendency of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.[144]

Whalen's position was unusual from the moment he accepted the job. He "arrived with an Act of Congress in my hip pocket" and not much else, he later recalled. Not only did he have a new kind of park, an area with attributes and objectives unfamiliar in Park Service history, he also had two superintendents of independent areas within his jurisdiction. He was also very young by the standards of agency leadership. "It was an awfully big job to be moving into and a high honor," he remembered with a laugh two decades later. "I probably should have been nervous but I wasn't."[145] Whalen arrived with a reputation for being able to bring diverse constituencies together. The circumstances at Golden Gate National Recreation Area seemed assured to test his abilities.

Whalen's first trip to his new assignment took place before he moved to the Bay Area. Douglass Cornell, at the time the Western Regional Office planner for Golden Gate National Recreation Area and later assistant superintendent of the park, showed Whalen the lands designated for the park during a two-day tour, briefing the new superintendent on the plethora of complicated issues that characterized his new situation. Coming from the beautiful Yosemite

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[144] William J. Whalen, interview by Sara Conklin, March 27, 1993, GGNRA Oral History Interview; Acting Park Historian to General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, March 29, 1985, CCF, Box 26, H 1417, Area and Service History; "Whalen Fired as Park Service Chief," *SFE*, April 25, 1980.

[145] Whalen interview, March 27, 1993.

Valley, Whalen was struck by Alcatraz Island, strewn with garbage after the eighteen-month occupation that ended in 1971. "Somehow it was a little incongruous," Whalen remembered, "leaving Yosemite and ending up with Alcatraz as part of my responsibility."[146] This articulation of the fundamental difference between urban space and traditional national parks proved prophetic.

At the same time, Golden Gate National Recreation Area offered features that could have easily been included in traditional national parks. Whalen was taken by the beauty of the wildlands in Marin County, the strip of rugged coast that stretched from the Golden Gate Bridge to the boundaries of Point Reyes National Seashore. He was also struck by the potential for adaptive reuse of the facilities the military ceded to the Park Service. Fort Mason was more than historically significant and it, in particular, presented opportunities to transform urban space. "What went through my mind immediately," Whalen recalled, "was that you could take these old military buildings and put them to good uses...educational uses, cultural uses."[147] Whalen's initial assessment accurately summarized some of the major issues the new park needed to address.

Before Whalen could tackle the many issues facing the new park, an administrative structure needed to be put in place. From a cramped space in the Park Service Western Regional Office in San Francisco, Whalen began to assemble the workings of a park. Whalen shared leadership. He enjoyed the support of Regional Director Howard Chapman, who offered advice when asked but also recognized that Golden Gate National Recreation Area was something new and Whalen possessed the skills to shape the park. Whalen found people he trusted and delegated authority to them. Fort Point Superintendent David Ames and Jerry Rumburg of the regional office took the lead in assembling a staff. "They put together," Whalen observed, "a very, very fine, intelligent, energetic, enthusiastic crew." Youth was one of the outstanding features of the group. At thirty-three, Whalen was stunningly young to run a park of this size and significance. The staff he compiled was equally young, as were those from the Regional Office who worked with the Golden Gate National Recreation Area project. Many came via the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and a lack of gray hair was a marker of participation. "I'm always amazed at how young we all were," Ray Murray recalled from the vantage point of twenty years, "and some of the huge things that were taken on."[148] The task was daunting, and the typical NPS administrative structure did not serve the purposes of the park.

At establishment, Whalen's title was "superintendent," but even in its early stages, Golden Gate National Recreation Area required subdivided administration. Local politics and other external factors demanded much of Whalen's time and he needed a staff to manage the park. Within one year of Whalen's arrival, a new arrangement developed. On July 1, 1974, Whalen became general superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, with primary responsibility for the four units of the national park system, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Fort Point National Historic Site, Muir Woods National Monument, and the previously independent Point Reyes National Seashore, grouped together under his leadership. Effectively, the new national recreation area became a regional national park under one leader.

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[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Whalen interview, March 27, 1993; Ray Murray, interview by Sara Conklin, July 8, 1993, GGNRA Oral History Interview.

Such arrangements had been tried before in the park system, but never in a situation with the political significance of the Bay Area. In many instances in Park Service history, smaller parks reported to the regional office through larger parks in an informal hierarchy, but until the 1960s, formal groupings were rare. The General Services Administration sought administrative conformity from federal agencies in the 1960s, and the pressure to cut costs and manage more efficiently propelled the Park Service to experiment with regional administration of parks. Most situations gathered a group of geographically proximate but largely remote parks under one administrative rubric. The Alaska Group Office was managed by the superintendent of Denali National Park from 1965 until it gained autonomy in 1969, and beginning in 1969, the Rocky Mountain Service Group, led by the superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park, administered Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site, Florrissant Fossil Beds National Monument, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Shadow Mountain National Recreation Area. An earlier "Bay Area Group" contained some of the parks later included in Golden Gate National Recreation Area as well as John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez in the East Bay, but its primary impetus was administrative. In other examples, such as the Navajo Lands Group in Arizona during the late 1960s, collections of smaller parks with similar themes shared services to avoid duplication of specialization. Such entities were not regionally managed. Instead, they shared a pool of specialized resources that were too expensive to individually provide to each small park. The result was better access to resources for these smaller parks and less staff at any individual park.[149] Compared to these earlier efforts, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Bay Area experiment truly attempted regional management of diverse parks under one subdivided management structure. It more closely resembled other federal regional planning efforts such as the Tennessee Valley Authority than it did earlier Park Service efforts.

The new structure meant that the general superintendent served as the equivalent of a chief executive officer and daily responsibilities had to be divided among the next tier of leadership. Effectively, the Park Service followed a pattern common in business management. An internal management team handled day-to-day responsibilities, while Whalen became the park's representative to the larger world. In the Bay Area, the range of entities with a stake in the park was enormous, and Whalen spent much of his time in meetings with other federal agencies, city, county, and state officials, and the interested public. At Golden Gate National Recreation Area, geography determined the divisions. Jerry L. Schober, previously superintendent at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site and Gettysburg National Military Park, was appointed superintendent of South Unit, which contained all the lands south of Golden Gate Bridge. John L. Sansing, superintendent of Point Reyes National Seashore, was appointed superintendent of North Unit, responsible for everything located in Marin County. Despite the formal assignment of responsibilities, Schober administered all of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Sansing continued to manage Point Reyes National Seashore. The distinction was telling; the boundary designation weighed more heavily on the ground than on paper. Schober regarded himself as the superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. He never used the title "Superintendent, South Unit, GGNRA," and only discovered that it was his actual job title when he ordered new business cards and they arrived inscribed with the appellation. Whalen served as supervisor over all park activity, but the similarity between his title of "general superintendent" and the one held by Schober and Sansing led to confusion.

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[149] Hal Rothman, *Navajo National Monument: A Place and Its People* (Santa Fe: National Park Service, 1991), Southwest Cultural Resources Series n. 41, 175-200; National Park Service, *National Park Service: Officials, Centennial Edition, March 1, 1972* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972).

Schober recalled that when he and Whalen would introduce themselves to a meeting, somehow no one would comprehend the "general" in the "general superintendent," and the audience would typically roll its eyes and wonder how an agency could have two people with the same job title.[150]

The confusing titles demanded resolution, and the Park Service tried a series of nomenclature changes in an effort to alleviate the problems. Whalen, whose title was "General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area/Point Reyes National Seashore," became "General Manager, Bay Area National Parks," on October 11, 1975, further promoting the idea of the regional grouping. The smaller parks gradually ceded independence. Before July 1, 1973, Muir Woods was attached to Point Reyes; from July 1, 1973 to July 1, 1974, the park was administered from Golden Gate National Recreation Area. On July 1, 1974, it reverted back to the supervision of Point Reyes, only this time the superintendent of Muir Woods reported to the "Superintendent, North Unit, Golden Gate National Recreation Area," in reality, the superintendent of Point Reyes National Seashore. In October 1975, Muir Woods was shifted back to supervision by the South Unit, essentially moving from the administration of Point Reyes to Golden Gate National Recreation Area. On March 11, 1977, the independent superintendent's position at Muir Woods was abolished. Fort Point evolved through a similar process. Established in 1970, before Golden Gate National Recreation Area, it too was folded into the new national recreation area. In 1974, the superintendent of Fort Point became subordinate to Schober, and on March 11, 1977, the separate superintendency at Fort Point was abolished. On October 1, 1977, Point Reyes National Seashore was removed from Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the concept of a North Unit was abolished. After October 22, 1977, the title of general manager was discontinued.[151]

Although it was easy to regard the convoluted lines of management as a reflection of the problems of bureaucracy, a search for the best pattern of responsibility underpinned the constant shifting of administrative responsibilities. Questions of purpose dogged the first few years of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, for Point Reyes National Seashore had been established for different reasons than its newer neighbor. Finding an administrative structure that made sense, did not fracture Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and took into account the need for efficient financial management and the lack of duplication of services led to a prolonged experiment. North and south of San Francisco Bay, Golden Gate National Recreation Area was two very different parks. Linking the largely open land in Marin County with the proximate Point Reyes National Seashore had clear appeal, but in the end, it seemed to divide the park into two different sections that over time would share less and less. In San Francisco, Golden Gate National Recreation Area enjoyed an urban constituency. In Marin County, ranchers and others defended local prerogatives while park advocates were more typical of the supporters of national parks around the country, people of means and influence who were accustomed to using their social and political standing to achieve their ends. The temporary inclusion of Point Reyes in the park raised its own independent questions. In Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the national seashore might become another subsidiary unit, its purpose subsumed into that of the larger recreational park. Maintaining Golden Gate National Recreation Area as one area and

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[150] Acting Park Historian to General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, March 29, 1985, CCF, Box 26, H1417 Area and Service History, Administrative History.

[151] Ibid.; "Annual Report, 1975, Muir Woods National Monument," SOA I; 1977 Annual Report, SOA I.

accounting for the needs of nearby parks became an overriding concern. This issue defined the first five years of administration at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

By the late 1970s, a pattern emerged. No matter what the position was called, one person would be in charge of both the areas of Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco and Marin County. This position carried considerable power in the Bay Area and required much political and personal skill. William Whalen was an outstanding choice; he served ably in the role until 1977, when he became director of the agency. Schober followed him, serving first as acting general manager of the Bay Area National Parks and continuing as superintendent until Lynn H. Thompson ascended to the permanent post on April 23, 1978. After Thompson's succession, jurisdictional and titular questions were muted, and issues such as planning and development took new prominence.[152]

Park leadership remained fluid until 1987, when Brian O'Neill assumed the superintendency. After Thompson stepped down on February 29, 1980, the post remained open until June 15, 1980, when William Whalen returned to the park in the aftermath of his unceremonious dismissal from the agency's directorship. Whalen stayed until the end of 1981, when John H. Davis assumed the reins of the park. Davis stayed until September 28, 1985, when he moved to the superintendency of Sequoia/King's Canyon National Park and Brian O'Neill became acting superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. O'Neill received permanent appointment on February 16, 1986 and became the longest serving superintendent in park history, a testimony to the way his personal style and the demands of a superintendency in the Bay Area fit together.[153]

O'Neill came to the Park Service via the defunct Heritage and Conservation Recreation Service (HCRS). A graduate of the University of Maryland, O'Neill came to San Francisco as assistant regional director of HCRS. When Secretary of the Interior James Watt abolished that agency in 1981, HCRS was folded into the Park Service. O'Neill volunteered to be on the transition team to integrate the two agencies. He discovered that the assistant superintendent position at Golden Gate National Recreation Area was open and knew that Whalen, with whom he had previously worked in Washington, D.C., was returning to fill the superintendent's position. "Are you interested in taking a chance on someone who might bring a fresh perspective," O'Neill asked Whalen, and when the superintendent responded affirmatively, O'Neill donned Park Service green. Whalen had already decided to leave the agency when O'Neill started in November 1981, but he did not inform his new hire. When Whalen announced his departure, O'Neill was surprised to find himself second in command to John H. Davis. Under Davis, an "old style buck ranger," one subordinate remembered, and a respected traditional Park Service leader, O'Neill took responsibility for outside relationships. Davis understood the value of ties with the community, but did not feel comfortable in that role. He managed the operational aspects of the park and sent O'Neill as his liaison to the larger community.[154] The gregarious and diplomatic O'Neill was well suited to the role.

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[152] Acting Park Historian to General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, March 29, 1985, CCF, Box 26, H1417 Area and Service History, Administrative History.

[153] Ibid.; Everhart, *The National Park Service*, 154.

[154] Brian O'Neill, interview by Hal Rothman, July 16, 2000; Everhart, *The National Park Service*, 60; Jay Eickenhorst, interview by Hal Rothman, July 17, 1999.

After Davis left, O'Neill sought the superintendency. His selection had the potential to create controversy, for he was not a longtime Park Service employee and his approach was unconventional. Regional Director Howard Chapman and Davis both recognized the need for a different approach at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Davis strongly supported O'Neill's candidacy and Chapman made the appointment.[155] The decision was a credit to their faith in O'Neill and their recognition of the differences in the issues the park faced.

O'Neill brought flair and style to the superintendency to accompany his healthy respect for tradition. After more than five years of functioning in the Bay Area, he recognized that the park needed a level of flexibility to respond to its challenges that were greater than most other parks in the system. One of the most important ways to achieve that flexibility was by creating policies that could help the agency fend off some of the more unusual and sometimes forceful requests made of it by groups, communities, and even other government agencies. Planning provided the key dimension of that strategy, and by the time O'Neill took the superintendent's chair, the park had clearly established planning and administrative mechanisms.

For staff, Golden Gate National Recreation Area was an adventure, a new operation that differed from their expectations. Most people who began careers in the Park Service sought to work in the crown jewels, the expansive natural parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, and Denali. Few envisioned an urban experience, but in the 1970s, only occasional opportunities to move from seasonal to permanent status existed. When Jay Eickenhorst, who experienced three years of being a seasonal at Yosemite, arrived at Golden Gate National Recreation Area to take his first permanent position, he found himself torn between different desires. "This wasn't what I went into the parks for, an urban setting with all the problems of a city," Eickenhorst remembered. Stationed in San Francisco, he aspired to Yosemite and initially envied his cohorts in Marin County. At least what they did reminded him of what he thought park rangers should be doing.[156]

As did many who came to Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Eickenhorst recognized not only the value of an urban park and its resources, but also the significance of the constituency it could reach. As his focus changed from the micro worldview of an inexperienced ranger in one small area of the park to a "broader understanding—taking the blinders off," Eickenhorst began to see the larger dimensions of the park and its possibilities. It fused nature and culture, urban experience with open space, and attracted a wider segment of the public than most parks. Within a few years, Eickenhorst and many who followed him recognized the importance of the park and found a home there. Golden Gate National Recreation Area easily harbored many kinds of differences, and rangers and other staff members found themselves with considerable autonomy and much control over the park's resources.

Decentralized management of the park at the local level contributed greatly to that autonomy. One of the most important innovations at Golden Gate National Recreation Area was the idea of grassroots autonomy for areas within the park. The Park Service had not been as fond of this idea as its longtime rival and counterpart the Forest Service, preferring instead to assert greater control from park headquarters, regional offices, and the Washington office. This contributed to a strong internal ethic in the agency, a set of ideas that were widely shared among

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[155] O'Neill interview, July 16, 2000.

[156] Eickenhorst interview, July 17, 1999.

Park Service staffers across the country.[157] The changes in American society in the late 1960s and the plethora of newcomers in the agency began to push the Park Service away from its traditional centralized emphasis. Regional differences between parks became more important, and the lessening of central power contributed to new approaches to management. The new emphasis on local variation was fortuitous. In the Bay Area, the diversity of park resources, the differences in their management and even the social climate in 1972, when the park was established, all demanded greater grassroots autonomy. Local authority seemed both more responsive and less oppressive at the local level.

In part, this pattern mirrored the Park Service's goals for Golden Gate National Recreation Area, its efforts to maintain loose central authority over the diverse ecology, cultural fabric, and recreational facilities. Rather than try to run the large park from a central office, the Park Service initially created six semi-autonomous ranger districts that served as governing authority for each area. It was as if each ranger district was its own park, an independent unit supervised by a district ranger who had responsibility for law enforcement, interpretation, search and rescue, and resource management activities. The district ranger also managed the park partners and permittees, leaving only the centralized functions of the park for headquarters. The creation of titles, such as "general superintendent." and especially the establishment of North and South units under separate superintendents further promoted grassroots autonomy. Each area of the park experienced considerable independence and each district ranger exercised much authority over individual units. On Alcatraz, also known as the Bay District, District Ranger Maria Burks managed the interpretation program, ferry contract, film permits, special events, activities of the Golden Gate National Park Association on the island, and private contractors working there. Law enforcement remained beyond her purview, but only because the island had none at the time. Stan Washington, district ranger for the South District, eschewed law enforcement, preferring to leave that to the U.S. Park Police. His staff was not a law enforcement detail and he wanted his staff to relate to people. "His bottom line was 'just go out and wine and cheese it,'" recalled Jay Eickenhorst, Washington's pet phrase for engaging visitors in interpretation and other non–law enforcement activities.[158]

The system provided advantages for a new park that sought to communicate with an urban public and that needed to establish its presence in a large metropolitan area. Park staff felt a strong and even proprietary commitment to their specific districts. They were multifaceted managers who had great experience with local resources. District organization fostered proximity between people with different functions. All the rangers in each district operated out of the same office buildings. Law enforcement rangers and resource managers had desks next to one another and sat next to each other in meetings. A tremendous crossover of duties also characterized the ranger districts. Many law enforcement rangers led interpretive walks as a regular part of their duties. All rangers did resource management work, such as leading volunteer work parties and participating in Raptor Observatory programs. At least one interpretive ranger, John Martini, held a law enforcement commission and performed enforcement duties. All rangers regardless of

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[157] Robert Shankland, *Steve Mather of the National Parks* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 89-122; Donald Swain, *Wilderness Defender: Horace M. Albright and Conservation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 1-16; for an analysis of the differences in agency culture, see Hal K. Rothman, "'A Regular Ding-Dong Fight: Agency Culture and Evolution in the Park Service-Forest Service Dispute, 1916-1937," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 26 2 (May 1989), 141-59.

[158] John Martini to Hal Rothman, October 1, 2000; Eickenhorst interview, July 17, 1999.

title participated in first aid, search and rescue, and firefighting activities. They worked side by side and trained across disciplines, learning to respect each others' skills and goals. "Sociologically, we formed a 'park family' unit," John Martini recalled, "and frequently held after-hours barbecues and other social events." Under the ranger districts, very little of the classic "pine pig vs. fern feeler" syndrome, as Martini labeled it, so prevalent in other parks developed.[159]

The decentralized ranger districts also provided considerable opportunity to ply the ranger's trade in ways that other parks did not. "I hated it at first," Eickenhorst recalled, but as he learned both the nature of urban parks and experienced the diversity of operations he undertook in his district, he recognized that the park provided him with experiences other parks could not. The presence of the U.S. Park Police also freed rangers to engage in the activities most favored. Few, as John H. Davis noted, joined the Park Service to be a police officer.[160] Golden Gate National Recreation Area permitted versatility, a direct result of the ranger districts.

Yet the decentralized ranger districts presented significant management problems as well. Initially, the autonomy of the rangers districts mirrored that of Fort Point and Muir Woods, independent units of the park system incorporated into Golden Gate National Recreation Area. But until 1977, Fort Point and Muir Woods had independent superintendents authorized by statute, while ranger districts functioned as if they were independent units but lacked legal authority to support independent administration. Local control meant responsiveness to the public, but it also fostered a competitive sort of independence. As a result, district rangers and their staff sometimes became territorial, protecting their own districts and resources at the expense of the park as a whole. In the most cynical observation of the system, one staff member recalled a late-1980s meeting in which the ranger districts were referred to as "the seven independent duchies of Golden Gate National Recreation Area."

The chain of command did not promote an equitable distribution of authority. Under the ranger districts, each district ranger reported to Chief Ranger Gil Soper. The other division chiefs had less field authority than the chief ranger, leading to questions about why interpretation and resource management did not have clear administrative control of their functions. Although the districts enjoyed considerable expertise, in resource management in particular, academic professionalism was missing. As a result, uneven attention to the different functions of management characterized the park. Interpretive activities revealed broad inconsistency throughout the park. At Fort Point and Muir Woods, interpretation was the cornerstone of visitor experience. At Stinson Beach, there was no interpretation. Although Stinson Beach was largely a recreational area, the lack of interpretation there reflected the unevenness generated by local control of park management. It also promoted different approaches to the management of park resources.

Reorganization of the administrative structure began again in 1993, after Len McKenzie came from Yosemite National Park to become Assistant Superintendent of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. At a July 1993 retreat in San Rafael—held to devise a basis for a public safety plan for the park—McKenzie and a number of others sought to create a new structure that would be acceptable to staff, provide adequate staffing, configure patrols or "beats" for the best law enforcement effectiveness, help manage budgetary constraints, and begin to account for the

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[159] John Martini to Hal Rothman, October 1, 2000.

[160] Eickenhorst interview, July 17, 1999; General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area to Regional Director, Western Region, August 6, 1984, PFGGNRA I, Park Police.

anticipated presence of the Presidio in the park. The solution they agreed upon was the creation of a position for an assistant superintendent responsible for public safety throughout the park. McKenzie believed that the creation of a line division of public safety underneath an assistant superintendent would subsume interpretation in that division. He argued that if a division of public safety were established, then a parallel division of interpretation also became necessary.[161]

Beginning in 1994, McKenzie's plan created a structure at Golden Gate National Recreation Area that followed the "Yellowstone model," which aimed for centralized control at park headquarters and line authority over each division that emanated from division chiefs, not district rangers. Driven by the Presidio addition and its implications for the park, McKenzie's innovation represented an enormous transformation of park style and procedure. It focused on consolidation of authority and efficiency of staffing. After more than two decades of decentralized control, new lines of authority that led directly to the headquarters at Fort Mason were established. Instead of the seven ranger districts, the park was divided into two, one north of Golden Gate Bridge and the other south. Staff members were redistributed to fill the new organizational structure, a change that could have led to considerable outcries from staff members. Surprisingly, little opposition followed. The rearrangement was accomplished with little loss of status and position, and most staff members went along.[162]

In the opinion of many longtime park staff, the reorganization was the pivotal moment in changing the park's culture. A few saw it as a draconian and short-sighted solution that destroyed much of the morale of field staff by curtailing both the diversity of their activities and their ability to offer integrated management. Law enforcement rangers suddenly went from being all-round rangers to mere officer rangers assigned to "beats" rather than districts. Interpretation and resource management duties disappeared from their job descriptions and they became Park Police, differentiated from the U.S. Park Police by their uniforms and lower pay grades. Interpreters experienced a narrowing of their obligations. They surrendered law enforcement, search and rescue, and resource management duties, and primarily interpreted. The resolution of whether natural resource management activities should be shifted to the districts or should remain under the Resource Management and Protection Division evolved through extensive debate and discussions held solely between the Chief of Resource Management, the Chief Ranger, the Park Administrative Officer and the Assistant Superintendent. Even the Superintendent did not participate. Resource Management activities, which remained crucial to park operations, were transferred almost entirely to a separate Division of Resource Management. People working in the field increasingly became "specialists" who received direction from Fort Mason and did not always include rangers or brief their counterparts about their activities often enough. In some areas law enforcement and interpretation rangers as well as resource management staff were ordered to move into separate buildings. As John Martini remembered, the reasoning was that the various disciplines' activities and schedules would bother the staff from other divisions. "My own and a few other voices cried out in the wilderness that sharing work space also meant sharing information and built friendships and professional relationships," Martini remembered, "but this argument pretty much fell on deaf ears."[163]

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[161] Len McKenzie, interview by Hal K. Rothman, October 8, 2000; Richard H. Bartke to Steve Haller, March 5, 2002.

[162] McKenzie interview, October 8, 2000.

[163] Martini to Rothman, October 1, 2000; Nadeau to Haller, January 23, 2002.

Reorganization had great advantages as well, including creating stronger professionalism in resource management and interpretation, and leading to greater consistency among park programs. The narrowing of responsibility for interpreters was "a huge improvement," McKenzie remembered. "Not only was Interpretation not getting short shrift in law enforcement, we were able to get staffed to the extent that funding would allow." Instead of being thirty-five members of a more than 170-member law enforcement division, Interpretation stood on its own. The reorganization also brought much professional expertise into the park in areas such as resource management.[164] In the end the concerns were neither strong enough nor sufficiently widespread to merit a return to the older ways. As time passed and the park staff grew, the memories of the era of ranger districts began to fade, and new staff, especially those associated with the Presidio who mostly started at the park after 1994, did not remember the autonomy of the ranger districts. As the park moved forward, the transformation from decentralized districts to centralized line authority reflected the growing need for professionally trained staff in all management areas.

Law enforcement loomed large among the different kinds of management issues the agency faced. Policing Golden Gate National Recreation Area was significantly different from enforcing federal law at Glacier National Park. The demands, responsibilities, and problems of being located in a large urban area required that rangers and other enforcement personnel engage in activities and observe a set of precautions similar to those of a big-city police department instead of a typical national park ranger force. Urban response set a precedent for agency policy and response as even remote parks such as Yosemite developed police problems similar to those of urban areas. Law enforcement provided another of the many ways that Golden Gate National Recreation Area carved a path toward the future of agency administration.

At its founding, Golden Gate National Recreation Area became one of only two national park units outside of the National Capital Parks with a permanent detachment of U.S. Park Police. Gateway National Recreation Area in New York also had a permanent contingent. Founded in the nineteenth century to provide watchmen for public parks in the nation's capital and given police powers after 1882, the U.S. Park Police emerged as an important force in the operation of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. They provided most law enforcement functions in the San Francisco sections of the park and lessened the burden of both the city of San Francisco and the Park Service. When they first arrived in 1974, Mayor Joseph Alioto of San Francisco was pleased. "Great," he is purported to have responded. "Now I can move my men to other areas of the city where they are needed." Expanding from twenty-nine to forty-four officers, including five horse-mounted officers, in 1977, the Park Police became a fixture at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.[165]

At the same time, the park moved to the next level of staffing, acquiring a number of new law enforcement rangers. Seven came from Yosemite National Park, five of whom were assigned to Marin County, and two, including Jay Eickenhorst, served in San Francisco. Eickenhorst, who spent more than twenty years at the park, and his peers in the city began the first attempts at creating Park Service search and rescue programs, much to the amusement, he recalled, of the San Francisco Fire Department. Despite the differences in approach—the Park

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[164] McKenzie interview, October 8, 2000.

[165] Barry Mackintosh, *The United States Park Police: A History* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1989), 57-60.

Service borrowed the brightly colored ropes as well as the techniques of sport climbing, while the fire department maintained its traditional use of sheer strength as the major component in rescues—the different agencies learned to appreciate each other as assets.[166] The Yosemite rangers' appearance and the beginning of the park's search and rescue served as an announcement of the park's intentions in law enforcement.

The division of authority between the U.S. Park Police and the Park Service was complicated and sometimes confusing. For the better part of the first decade, the park and the Park Police worked out agreements to cover the extent of each jurisdiction. The two agencies established a fundamental division, almost entirely on a north/south of the Golden Gate basis.

The first chief ranger for the new park was Ray Murphy, who came from Point Reyes, and began to create a law enforcement staff. On the south side, Stan Washington, district ranger for the South District during those years, refrained from law enforcement, preferring to leave that to the U.S. Park Police on federal land. His staff was not a law enforcement detail and he wanted them to relate to people in a way he did not feel was possible while wearing law enforcement equipment. To the north, Dick Hardin, formerly Superintendent of Muir Woods National Monument, was reassigned as Unit Manager for the Marin side of the park. With his district rangers—Dick Danielsen at Stinson Beach, Marvin Hershey at Muir Woods, and Dale Peterson at Marin Headlands—Hardin continued building the staff to provide full law enforcement services throughout the Marin portion of GGNRA with park rangers.

Although the original contingent of Park Police provided a single 24 hour patrol "beat" in the Marin Headlands, by 1976, rangers were providing law enforcement as well as search and rescue, medical, and fire response. Park Rangers provided all law enforcement and other public safety functions at Muir Woods, Muir Beach, and Stinson Beach by early 1977. By the early 1980s, the Park Police and the park had developed a close-knit and functional relationship. Of the three possible types of federal jurisdiction—exclusive, concurrent, and proprietary—Golden Gate had two—exclusive and proprietary, while Pt. Reyes National Seashore eventually became concurrent.

In proprietary jurisdiction, which covered most of the park, unless personnel were deputized or cross-deputized by other jurisdictions, federal law enforcement officers could only enforce NPS regulations and the laws of certain sections of the United States Code. State enforcement officers were expected to uphold state laws and those violations of law were considered state offenses. Park Police and law enforcement Park Rangers could only enforce the law on non-federal land if deputized. In concurrent jurisdictions, entirely within the boundaries of Point Reyes National Seashore, both state and federal law applied and each enforced and prosecuted violations that fell under its jurisdiction, with the added benefit that the federal officers enforced all laws, both state and federal. In exclusive jurisdictions, most of the formerly military lands administered by the park, only federal law applied and federal magistrates heard all violations of law. When operating under exclusive jurisdiction, the Park Rangers handled rules, regulations, and initial violations of more serious laws.

Regardless of jurisdiction, for more substantive or serious violations, the investigative unit of the U.S. Park Police would conduct follow-up investigations. And regardless of jurisdiction, both organizations agreed to provide each other with backup when necessary. By the early 1990s, the Park Police averaged more than 1,000 arrests a year, the vast majority for

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[166] Eickenhorst interview, July 17, 1999.

alcohol and drug law violations.[167]

The overlap between the two organizations often confused visitors. To the traveling public, a uniform was a uniform. Most visitors could not easily distinguish park rangers and U.S. Park Police at a glance. Fewer cared about the differences in their missions and responsibilities. The Park Police were law enforcement officials who behaved as a police force. Until 1994, when reorganization changed the line authority in the park, park rangers who performed law enforcement duties also interpreted, managed resources, and engaged in other functions. Visitors could not always correctly associate the different uniforms with the tasks each were expected to perform, leading to occasional complaints that park personnel—U.S. Park Police—were not as helpful to visitors.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area experienced a range of law enforcement problems that were characteristic of national recreation areas but uncommon elsewhere in the park system. The U.S. Park Police typically handled most of such activities, for the park rangers were limited by agreement to enforcement of rules. When activities such as parties on the beach, public drinking and the resulting intoxication appeared, the Park Police took the lead in enforcing the law. In 1978, Stinson Beach became a center for nightly gatherings. Park Service policy had the rangers responding to such incidents with drawn guns, a situation that park managers decided was unwise and likely to have unintended and unhappy consequences. Firearms were replaced with batons, far better suited to the nature of the confrontation. But the situation at the beach was typical of the many the Park Service faced. Its law enforcement protocol derived from a different set of assumptions and still fit awkwardly in urban areas. As a result of such situations, the Park Service felt less reluctance to turn over law enforcement activities to the U.S. Park Police. The Park Police handled more than eighty percent of incidents in the park, investigating more than eighty-six percent of all kinds of offenses, eighty-two percent of vehicle accidents, and seventy-five percent of service incidents during the late 1970s.[168] By 1980, the U.S. Park Police had become the primary police force at Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

The Park Police were an asset for Golden Gate National Recreation Area and by the early 1980s, when a campaign to terminate the San Francisco post began, Superintendent John H. Davis strongly voiced his support for the unit. Treating law enforcement as "a major program responsibility," Davis complimented the U.S. Park Police on their years of operational support and favored retaining them. The cost of creating a parallel Park Service unit was too great, Davis believed, and removing the Park Police from Golden Gate National Recreation Area represented neither efficiency nor economy. "The park ranger that comes to GGNRA would become first and foremost a policeman," Davis observed, not the primary goal of most of the people who joined the agency. The Park Police stayed at Golden Gate National Recreation Area. When a similar effort to replace the Park Police followed in 1984, the park again took a strong stand.[169] The U.S. Park Police had become an integral part of park operations.

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[167] Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area to Law Enforcement Rangers and Technicians, July 27, 1978, PFGGNRA I, Park Police; General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area to Regional Director, Western Region, March 8, 1982; "The Park Police: No Wimps Allowed," *MT*, October 1993, 9.

[168] Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area to Regional Director, July 17, 1978, PFGGNRA I, Park Police; General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area to Advisory Commissioners, May 23, 1978, PFGGNRA I, Park Police.

[169] General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area to Regional Director, Western Region, March 8, 1982; General Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area to Regional Director, Western Region,

Yet by the early 1990s, before the advent of the Presidio, the situation had evolved so that the Park Service had taken on some of the law enforcement obligations of the U.S. Park Police at Alcatraz, Ocean Beach, and in Marin County, while the Park Police handled San Francisco. A revision of the memorandum of understanding between the two agencies signed in 1995 clarified the new obligations.[170]

Maintenance at Golden Gate National Recreation Area was also different from at many other parks. At most Park Service units, maintenance obligations were distinct from other park functions, but in the urban setting of the Bay Area, the activities were intricately tied to the man-made environments around the park. In many situations, maintenance activities became intertwined with other park functions such as resource management. In some cases, the difference between the division responsible for an activity became a question of definition.

The park's response to the sewage spilling from the Bay Area's complicated waste treatment program served as a primary example of the indistinct boundary between maintenance and other activities. Since the nineteenth century, sewage had been a special problem in San Francisco. For more than a century, Bay Area communities discharged their sewage into San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. By the 1920s, much of the Bay Area had moved to solve its sewage problems with the technologies of the day, but post-World War II growth once again taxed existing water treatment and disposal systems. By the 1970s, much of the Bay Area's sewage was treated, and in dry weather it was dumped far into the ocean. In wet weather, untreated and sanitary sewage—code for treated wastewater—were discharged closer to the coast, often contaminating the city's beaches. In some years, beaches were closed as many as 100 days.[171]

When city planners unveiled the Westside Transport/Storage Project in 1977, it was touted as an answer to the region's ongoing sewage and wastewater management problems. The project was designed to alleviate the closure of beaches and other impediments to local quality of life. It proposed a massive renovation of the San Francisco and Bay Area water and wastewater treatment systems. One of its primary features was a huge consolidation sewer under the Upper Great Highway. It was slated to begin at Fulton Street and stretch 200 feet past Sloat Boulevard, a distance of 13,300 feet. A pump station west of the San Francisco Zoo, as well as the enlargement of eight city street sewers, were included in the project. The goal was simple. By creating the consolidation sewer with a pump station, the city could store wastewater in the new facility during wet weather, alleviating the pollution on city beaches.[172]

The Westside Transport/Storage Project was proposed as the city's political system underwent dramatic changes. With the 1975 election of Mayor George Moscone, a more inclusive brand of local politics took shape. New voices exerted influence; gays, Central

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August 6, 1984, PFGGNRA I, Park Police.

[170] McKenzie interview, October 8, 2000.

[171] Department of City Planning, San Francisco, *Final Environmental Impact Report: West Side Transport/Storage Project EE 75.304*, 16-22, May 17, 1977, "San Francisco Government, Wastewater," PFGGNRA I Collections, Box 11/25 MS 3805; Sarah Elkind, *Bay Cities and Water Politics: The Battle for Resources in Boston and Oakland*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998).

[172] Department of City Planning, San Francisco, "Final Environmental Impact Report: West Side Transport/Storage Project EE 75.304," May 17, 1977.

Americans, ethnic Chinese, and other constituencies asserted themselves, some for the first time, and neighborhood activism took on an enviable ferocity. Powerful environmental sentiment also spoke loudly as well, its concerns articulated by popular *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen.[173] The Westside project illustrated not only the adamance of environmentalists but the quality of life demands and needs of a wide range of constituencies as well. The city needed better sewage disposal, but the combination of cost and possible impact on quality of life made the project controversial. Tension swirled about the West Side Transport/Storage Project, a crucial element of San Francisco's Wastewater Management Plan.

As did every federal undertaking, the Westside project required the approval of a range of affected entities and agencies. Because the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency intended to finance seventy-five percent of the $129 million project, the compliance requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 became paramount. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors, State Water Resources Control Board, North Central Coast Regional Commission, and Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which contained the Great Highway and Ocean Beach, all needed to review the project as well. The Westside project, deemed necessary by planners to alleviate the growing crisis in sewage management, faced a range of regional interests with the ability to restrict its progress. Susceptible to pressure, these commissions were crucial to the future of the sewage project.

Environmentalists provided important opposition. The 1970s yielded some of the greatest successes for the environmental movement, and supported by the power of statute and the sentiments of Phil Burton and other congressmen and women, environmentalists felt secure in challenging projects on an ecological basis. The battle in Tennessee over the Tellico Dam and the little fish called the snail darter, which threatened the renewal of the Endangered Species Act in 1978, served as an announcement of the power of ecological thinking.[174] Anti-growth thinking played a role in the Bay Area, as efforts to slow the influx of people and mistrust of the regional power structure played into opposition. In the liberal cultural climate of San Francisco, where environmental sentiment had been powerful for much of the twentieth century, a sewage project, however valuable, was unlikely to proceed without challenge.

The environmentalists' response emboldened the Park Service, which had not yet asserted itself in Bay Area politics. At the behest of the planning staff, National Park Service Director William Whalen responded to city efforts to initiate the wastewater project with a forceful stance. In a plea to San Francisco's "environmentally aware" citizens, Whalen wrote, the project was "an affront" to the values of the community. Whalen's intervention from afar revealed a newfound confidence in local affairs for the Park Service. The Westside Transport/Storage project was a direct threat to the park. Ocean Beach in Golden Gate National Recreation Area faced erosion problems that the sewer would clearly exacerbate.[175] The location of the sewer pipe could also diminish the available beach as a result of the creation of a seawall. Five years in the Bay Area gave the agency a set of relationships and a stronger position that combined to become a willingness to articulate its regional needs with authority.

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[173] Richard Edward DeLeon, *Left Coast City: Progressive Politics in San Francisco, 1975-1991* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 44-52.

[174] Rothman, *The Greening of a Nation?,* 125-27; Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: The American West and Its Disappearing Water* (New York: Viking, 1986).

[175] "Portrait of Problems: The Sewer Plant," *San Francisco Today*, August 30, 1978.

For Golden Gate National Recreation Area, assessing the impact of the Westside Storage project was crucial. Ocean Beach and the Great Highway faced considerable impact from the project; some believed that the beach at Ocean Beach would be lost if the sewage project was constructed. During an August 1–3, 1978 Ocean Beach Erosion Conference, sponsored by Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the park sought to discern the ways in which Ocean Beach was a natural seafront and the ways in which human intervention had changed it. Crucial to this understanding was an assessment of the changes in public recreational opportunities. Already transformed by human intervention, the beachfront required management. The questions became what kind of management and under what circumstances.[176]

The Park Service possessed a different set of management objectives than the state, county, and city highway departments. It consumed thousands of hours of staff time. Park managers at the time had little interest in engaging in the issue and they left the fight entirely in the hands of the planning staff. Throughout the long duration of the fight, planners wrote the memos, made all of the appearances at abusive Board of Supervisors meetings, contracted for all of the special studies, and attended countless meetings. Ron Treabess, Denver Service Center planner stationed at the park, carried most of this load He needed both to protect park resources and accommodate local needs for transportation. As part of the Westside Storage project and the Great Highway reconstruction, two separate roads, one four-lane and the other two-lane, were to be created in place of the existing road. The four-lane was to be the highway, while the two-lane section became a service road for local use. Under the proposal, the dunes were engineered to minimize blowing sand across the road. European dune grass, an exotic and highly invasive species, was to play an important role in stabilizing the dunes. At about the same time, an infusion of capital for management funded development that made the area safer and better suited for park use. In 1986, the agency requested $200,000 in matching funds to implement the city of San Francisco's beach nourishment plan at Ocean Beach. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed the plan, which called for approximately one to two million cubic yards of sand to continually replenish the Ocean Beach system. Planners expected the stabilization to maintain the recreational beach for almost twenty years.[177]

The combined impact of the Park Service and other opponents halted the Westside project. On September 7, 1978, the North Central Coast Regional Commission voted nine to zero against the Westside project and the redesign of the Great Highway that accompanied it. After the approval of the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Regional Water Control Board, and Recreation and Park Commission, the rejection stunned the city and delighted opponents. The North Central Coast Regional Commission reaffirmed its vote in October, and the Westside project came to a halt. A decade later, the Great Highway erosion problem had been addressed with a technological program to protect the dunes. In the aftermath, the Richmond Transport Project, which provided sewage transport from Richmond District and points east in San Francisco to Ocean Beach to alleviate sewage spills, helped alleviate the region's sewage management problems.[178]

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[176] Ocean Beach Erosion Conference, August 1-3, 1978, Natural Resource Management Records Box L30.4 Ocean Beach, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives.

[177] Nadeau to Haller, January 23, 2002.

[178] Jim Kelly, "Tipping Nature's Balance," *San Francisco Progress*, July 30, 1978; "Sewer Project Rejection Stuns City Officials," *SFE*, September 8, 1978; Carol Kroot, "Board Rehashes Sewer Loss," *San Francisco Progress*, September 13, 1978; "Coastal Agency Made Bad Move," *San Francisco Progress*, September 20, 1978; "Highway Sewer Rejected Again," *SFE*, October 20, 1978; Suzanne Calio, "Corrective Surgery for the Great Highway," *Landscape Architecture*, September 1978, 424-29; Donald J. Birron to Dean Macris and Barney Barron,

In the end, a joint city-park response reshaped the face of Ocean Beach but kept its recreational possibilities. Atop the sewer system, the city built a seawall, reshaped sand piles, created vegetation cover from native and exotic species, and maintained an artificial dune buffer between the sea and the sewer box. The Park Service appeared satisfied that the Ocean Beach issue had been handled with as comprehensive attention to park objectives as could be achieved. In park management, after the completion of the project, Ocean Beach ceased to be treated as a natural resources management issue and instead became a maintenance issue.[179] The transfer of responsibility suggested the degree to which the area had become a man-made ecosystem, an environment that existed because of management and that depended on human intervention to continue.

The combination of issues and the variety of resource management situations at Golden Gate National Recreation Area prompted the park to devise a series of operations strategies that responded to the complicated political and cultural circumstances of the Bay Area. The shift in executive level management hierarchies, the transformation of the park from independent subunits to line division, the evolution of staff responsibilities into specialized units all reflected the park's complexity and the growing difficulty of management of a large series of connected areas within a city. Park operations reflected the agency's priorities for Golden Gate National Recreation Area; implementing those priorities required an entirely different kind of negotiation with the many publics that comprised the Bay Area.

March 15, 1985, PFGGNRA 1985-1994 Box 6 - City Government, San Francisco, Department of Public Works; 'Proposal to Move the Reconstructed Great Highway West," National Park Service Statement for the Board of Supervisors Meeting, May 13, 1983, Natural Resource Management Records, Box 8, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives; Jim Kelly, "Great Highway and Seawall: A Look Tonight," *San Francisco Progress*, January 30, 1985.

[179] Dave Fulton to Doug Nadeau, September 17, 1979; Regional Chief Scientist to Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, December 12, 1980; CCF, Box 13, D3217 Beaches Volume 4, Ocean Beach, Golden Gate National Recreation Area Archives.